

## **EPA Urges Public to Lock Up Household Products to Protect the Lives of Children in Conjunction with National Poison Prevention Week, March 21-27**

Lock household pesticides and chemicals in a high cabinet. That's the simple message of "Lock It Up" which is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) childhood poison prevention campaign for Poison Prevention Week. EPA will observe National Poison Prevention Week from March 21-27, 2004 to increase awareness of the danger to children of unintentional poisoning from household pesticides and chemicals, and to encourage parents, grandparents and caregivers to lock up products that could potentially harm children. Last Fall, in collaboration with the American Association of Poison Control Centers, EPA developed and distributed more than 23,000 copies of a poster with the "Lock It Up" message to poison centers, clinics, hospitals and health departments across the country. During Poison Prevention Week, Washington, D.C. area commuters will see the poster inside local Metro trains.



Photograph courtesy of Generations United

The American Association of Poison Control Centers reports that 36% of poisonings in children take place in their grandparents' home. The Census Bureau reports that approximately 4.4 million children under the age of 18 live in a grandparent-headed household, and 2.4 million grandparents are the primary caregivers for their grandchildren. Every 15 seconds U.S. poison centers receive a call about someone being exposed to a poison. Forty percent of those cases involve a child under three years of age. According to the National Safety Council, more than half of the two million poisoning incidents each year involve children under six years of age. Such figures show the need for everyone to lock up household pesticides and chemicals in a high cabinet out of the reach of children. In most poisonings, children swallow common substances found around the home: prescription drugs, non-prescription pain killers, vitamins, cosmetics, and personal care and cleaning products. Many of the poisonings also involve house plants, tobacco products and alcohol.

National Poison Prevention Week was first authorized by Congress in 1961. This year's theme is "Children Act Fast... So Do Poisons!" because it only takes a few moments for a small child to grab and swallow a poisonous substance. Adults should carefully read labels and store hazardous household chemicals away from children at all times. To raise awareness of how to prevent poisonings and exposures to household cleaners and pesticides, EPA makes available the following free poison prevention resources:

- ✓ **"Lock It Up" Poster** (EPA 735-H-03-002) urges parents and caregivers to lock household products away from children.
- ✓ **Poison Prevention: Read the Label First! Community Action Kit** (EPA-735-E-04-003) includes training materials for communities to heighten awareness about preventable poisonings caused by improper use and storage of household products.

- ✓ ***Ten Tips to Protect Children From Pesticide and Lead Poisonings*** (EPA-735-F-03-001). This brochure provides simple steps to protect children from pesticide and lead poisonings around the home. It is available in English and Spanish
- ✓ ***Read the Label First! Protect Your Kids***. This pamphlet provides information to prevent children from being exposed to pesticides and household cleaners by reading and following product label instructions and precautions. It is available online at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/labeling/rtlf/kids.pdf>.
- ✓ ***Pesticides and Child Safety*** (EPA-735-F-93-050). This fact sheet provides current household pesticide-related poisoning/exposure statistics from the American Association of Poison Control Centers, as well as recommendations for preventing poisonings. This document is available at:  
<http://epa.gov/pesticides/citizens/childsaf.htm>.
- ✓ ***Protect Your Family: Know the Dangers of Illegal Pesticides***. This brochure alerts parents to the dangers of illegal pesticides. Available in English, Chinese, Portuguese, and Spanish. To order copies, contact Vivian Conte at (732)321-6770 or email [conte.vivian@epa.gov](mailto:conte.vivian@epa.gov).
- ✓ ***Pesticide Safety Magnets*** (EPA-735-E-04-001). These magnets can be placed on the refrigerator to remind people to use pesticides safely.
- ✓ ***Pesticide Safety Magnifier/Bookmark*** (EPA-E-04-002) This magnifier and bookmark assists those with low vision or vision impairments read the labels of household pesticides and chemicals.
- ✓ ***Learn About Chemicals Around Your House***. This interactive website is designed to teach children and parents about household products, including pesticides, that may contain harmful chemicals. Visit the Web site at  
<http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/kids/hometour/index>.
- ✓ ***Safe Storage and Disposal Web site***. This website contains information on proper storage and disposal of household products.  
[www.epa.gov/pesticides/regulating/storage.htm](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/regulating/storage.htm)

All of these free resources are available by calling 1-800-490-9198 or visiting <http://www.epa.gov/ncepihom/index.htm>. More information on Poison Prevention Week is available at <http://www.poisonprevention.org/>.